

and mother, and It was In this capacity that the Egyptians honoured and worshipped her most."<sup>1</sup>  
HOW isis Thus in her character of a goddess of fecundity Isis yefdiffereed answered to the great mother goddesses of Asia, though she from the differed from them in the chastity and fidelity of her conjugal GoddeUs } ^ e 5 for while they were unmarried and dissolute, she had a of Asia. husband and was a true wife to him as well as an affectionate mother to their son. Hence her beautiful Madonna-like figure reflects a more refined state of society and of morals than the coarse, sensual, cruel figures of Astarte, Anaitis, Cybele, and the rest of that crew. A clear trace, Indeed, of an ethical standard very different from our own lingers In her double relation of sister and wife to Osiris ; but In most other respects she Is rather late than primitive, the full-blown flower rather than the seed of a long religious development. The attributes ascribed to her were too various to be all her own. They were graces borrowed from many lesser deities, sweets rifled from a thousand humbler plants to feed the honey of her superb efflorescence. Yet in her complex nature it is perhaps still possible to detect the original nucleus round which by a slow process of accretion is is the other elements gathered. For if her brother and husband perhaps Osiris was In one of his aspects the corn-god, as we have seen a goddess reason to believe, she must surely have been the corn-goddess. of the com. There are at least some grounds for thinking so. For if we may trust Diodorus Siculus, whose authority appears to have been the Egyptian historian Manetho, the discovery of wheat

and barley was attributed to Isis, and at her festivals stalks of these grains were carried in procession to commemorate the boon she had conferred on men.<sup>2</sup> A further detail is added by Augustine. He says that Isis made the discovery of barley at the moment when she was sacrificing to the common ancestors of her husband and herself, all of whom had been kings, and that she showed the newly discovered ears of barley to Osiris and his councillor Thoth or Mercury, as Roman writers called him. That is why,

<sup>1</sup> E. A. Watlis Budge, *The Gods of Egypt*, passage on the early religion of the Egyptians, ii. 203 *sp.* Egypt, prefacing it with the remark

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 14. I *sg.* that Diodorus's account of the sub-Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelii*, iii. ject was more concise than that of

3) quotes from Diodorus a long Manetho.